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OBSERVATIONS ON DR. FULLER'S LECTURE

It is a distinct pleasure for me to be the discussion leader for Dr. Fuller's scholarly paper, *New Testament Roots to the Theotokos*. I have been associated with him as a member of the newly-founded American Branch of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary and also as the fellow teacher of an interconfessional and interdisciplinary course on Mary in Scripture, Tradition and the Ecumenical Dialogue.

Dr. Fuller's brilliant presentation has brought us to the real meaning of "Roots" in the title of his paper. I should like to ask him first to explain whether or not this notion of "roots" would be connected with that of "trajectory" used to describe some of the developments in the Church concerning Peter in the New Testament. He is a member of the special task force of New Testament scholars who have been working on Mary in the New Testament and should be in a very fine position to tell us about the progress in this important study. Let us hope that before much longer their scholarly research will see the light of day in book-form and will contribute greatly to the ecumenical dialogue as did their publication, *Peter in the New Testament*.

The outstanding contribution of Dr. Fuller's paper appears to be his very convincing synthesis of the various New Testament Christologies. He has brought out the profound unity amidst their rich diversity which is reflected in the later Christological developments at the early ecumenical councils of the Church. So often in recent years these diverse Christologies have been presented as though they were in conflict instead of being truly complementary. It would be indeed very helpful for us to hear Dr. Fuller's comments upon his own application of the historical-critical method which, in the case of his

New Testament scholarship, leads to a sound synthetic view of the Canon as a complex unity.

Finally, I should like to ask Dr. Fuller about his own Trinitarian theology. And the background on this goes behind his paper to a discussion that we had on the problem when teaching together the ecumenical course on Mary. He seems to distinguish between the first and second persons of the Blessed Trinity in understanding the revelation of the Father to be *Deus in sese* and of the Son to be *Deus pro nobis*. My own difficulty with this manner of distinguishing the divine Persons is that in the New Testament the Father is also revealed in terms of being the gracious God turned toward us in our need for His redeeming love. Although it is true that our Christological faith holds only the Son to have become incarnate, still I prefer making the distinction between the "immanent" and the "economic" Trinity. The latter, based upon the existential mode of the biblical revelation, presents us with a faith-understanding of who each of the three Persons is for us, or in the economy of our salvation. The former, based upon the ontological mode of the dogmatic formulations made at the ecumenical councils of the early Church, portray the Persons in themselves or within the bosom of the triune Godhead. Cannot the Father and the Son as well as the Holy Spirit be considered in our faith-understanding both in their inner relations to one another (immanent Trinity) and in their reference to creation and redemption (economic Trinity)? I look forward to further discussion with Dr. Fuller about this complex but central question of theological interpretation.

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